

"Nwanze, Kanayo"

<K.NWANZE@CGIAR.ORG>

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To: "Reifschneider, Franci..(Cgiar)" <F.Reifschneider@Cgiar.Org>
"Rsmusangi@Wananchi.Com" <Rsmusangi@Wananchi.Com>, <Couka@Cgiar.Org" <P.Kouka@Cgiar.Org>, <Hernandez, Josephine (Cgsec)" <J.Hernandez@Cgiar.Org>, <rauney@Worldbank.Org" <Jyauney@Worldbank.Org>
Subject: ExCo4 WARDA document

Dear Francisco,

I refer to the e-mail from Franklin Moore of the USAID, calling for an agenda item on WARDA with specific reference to WARDA's Gene bank and long-term return plan to Headquarters. We appreciate the interest of the ExCo, in particular of the USAID, for information on WARDA's management of the Ivorian crisis. In this respect, I wish to recall WARDA's consistent efforts to keep the CGIAR membership informed of developments in Côte d'Ivoire, their impact on WARDA and the Center's crisis management strategy. To this effect, we have sent Updates and News Releases to the membership and to WARDA's stakeholders soon after the commencement of hostilities, in October and December 2002, and March and April 2003. These are posted on WARDA's website.

In response to the specific issues raised by USAID, please find attached a summary document on "Managing the Ivorian Crisis: A Summary Report" highlighting the following:

- a. Major events since September 19 2002;
- b. Management of WARDA's Genetic Resources;
- c. Return plan to Bouaké and M'bé.

I should close by recognising the immense support both moral and financial, that WARDA has received from the CGIAR particularly, the World Bank and several members who have in many ways made it possible for us to continue our operations away from our Headquarters at M'bé. Recent developments in Côte d'Ivoire have heightened our level of confidence that return to Headquarters at M'bé is an imminent event in the near future.

We would be delighted to receive the outcome from ExCo's deliberations on WARDA at its Paris meeting.

With best personal regards,

Kanayo

**Managing the Ivoirian Crisis: A Summary Report
Submitted to the Executive Committee of the CGIAR**

1. Major Events

First 30 Days: Relocation to Abidjan, Short-, Medium- and Long-term Crisis Management Strategies Developed and End-of-Season Activities Resumed

- 19 Sep 2002: Military crisis; Bouake becomes epicentre of armed conflict
- 26 Sep 2002: WARDA evacuates and relocates to Abidjan – 250 staff (IRS& GSS¹) and families. No casualties reported.
- Early Oct 2002: Short, medium and long-term plans developed. Short-term plan initiated.
 - Majority of IRS remain in Abidjan in response to Council and Board Chairs' endorsements of Management's decision. Most families evacuated from CI; some IRS also evacuate voluntarily.
 - Executive Management, Administration and Finance operate from Abidjan Liaison Office (ALO); scientists accommodated at UNOPS/rented offices
 - Consolidation of GSS staffing plan initiated
 - Information received of heroic efforts of local staff returning to work at M'be and key-sites in Danane and Gagnoa in Western CI. All trials and experiments maintained, harvested and data recorded through telephone communication with scientists in Abidjan
 - End-of-season activities resumed: data analysis, report writing, journal article preparation, participation in workshops/monitoring tours, project development with NARS
 - Regional activities conducted without interruption

Nov-Dec 2002: Medium-term Plan Initiated, Data Retrieved from M'be, and "Campus Intact" Confirmed

- 01 Nov 2002: ICRISAT agrees in principle to allocate offices, labs and farmland to WARDA at its Samanko-Bamako, Mali station. Negotiations with Malian Authorities set in motion
- 18-20 Nov 2002: First official mission to Bouake and M'be
 - All the servers, 25 pcs, important documents, personal effects recovered
 - All installations, communications, electricity, water functioning; offices and labs intact; genebank operations uninterrupted but another culture lab disrupted due to temporary power outage
- 13-16 Dec 2002: Second official mission to Bouake and M'be
 - Over 6000 accessions, including new collections and breeding lines (80% of total germplasm collection) retrieved, personal effects recovered
 - Fire prevention measures initiated on the Campus

¹ GSS – General Service Staff, equivalent to "local staff" category elsewhere, are recruited not only from Côte d'Ivoire but also from other West African countries, as per HCA.

- “Move team” evaluates ICRISAT-Mali facilities and interacts with Malian authorities and ICRISAT staff. Temporary Relocation Plan developed
- 15-18 Dec 2002: Visit of Board Vice Chair, Prof Musangi of Kenya to Abidjan (on behalf of the EFC of the Board that was to have met in conjunction with visit of Chair and Director of CGIAR cancelled due to World Bank’s travel advisory)
 - Reviewed Management decisions on crisis management
 - Recommended decisions and actions to be taken (later endorsed by Board)
 - Met with Government authorities and diplomatic community
 - Televised Press Conference held

Jan-Feb 2003: Scientists and Support Staff Temporarily Relocated to Bamako, WARDA Full Board Meeting Held

- 2-10 Jan 2003: All IRS who had voluntarily evacuated from CI return to Abidjan
 - Temporary relocation plan revisited; medium term plan activated
 - GSS skeleton staff list finalised for Abidjan and Bamako
 - Time-frame for move to Bamako agreed
 - Negotiations with Government of Mali and ICRISAT concluded.
- 28 Jan 2003: First batch of IRS scientists moves to Bamako; medium term plan implemented
- 02 Feb 2003: Second and final batch of IRS scientists moves to Bamako
- Early Feb 2003: Staff resettled, offices and labs allocated, farmland prepared, some families return to Bamako
- 22-24 Feb 2003: Third mission to Bouake/M’be, data and personal effects retrieved
- 24-28 Feb 2003: WARDA Full Board meets in Bamako, Mali.
 - Board decides on a 2-year timeframe in Mali thus activating the long-term strategy of crisis management
 - Endorses, approves or modifies as appropriate Management actions related to human and financial resources management decisions
 - Visit of Dr Francisco Reifschneider; interaction with Board, Management and Staff; support of CGIAR assured – a catalytic effect on staff morale to bounce back and forge ahead with renewed dynamism
- End February: Shipment of recovered germplasm accessions to IITA. Duplicate batch retained in Abidjan

Mar-Apr 2003: African Rice Initiative (ARI) Coordinator Recruited, Research Review & Planning Meetings Held

- 02-04 Mar 2003: Interview for the position of ARI Coordinator. Candidate selected; position offered and accepted.
- 04 Mar 2003: Host Country Agreement signed between the Government of Mali and WARDA
- 28-31 Mar 2003: Fourth mission to Bouake/M’be. Harvested seed from trials, data, and personal effects retrieved
- 28 Apr-2 May 2003: Research Days in Bamako (delayed research review and planning meetings – outputs to feed into new Strategic Plan and future MTP)

2. Management of Genetic Resources

WARDA's long-term storage of its rice germplasm has traditionally been maintained at IITA as part of a long-standing agreement between both Centers. Thus apart from our newest lines and latest germplasm collections that were made in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea in 2000, most of WARDA's rice accessions are stored at IITA. Some duplicate samples are also stored at IRRI. In 2001, the Government of Japan provided special funds to WARDA for upgrading its genebank for medium-term storage facilities. This project was initiated at the end of 2001 and early 2002 with the purchase of a first set of equipment. Additional funds have been allocated as part of the World Bank's contribution for upgrading Centers' genebanks. These funds should bring the Center's regional rice genebank facility to highest standards as well as meet the requirements of its national partners for long-term storage, maintenance and regeneration of material.

During the last several months of the Ivoirian crisis, we have been able to recover all germplasm material from M'be totaling about 7,500 accessions to date. These were packaged in two duplicate batches, with one being sent to IITA for regeneration and storage. A small team of WARDA staff was deployed for this activity. Another batch is stored in deep freezers in Abidjan. Additionally, we have reached agreement with Fort Collins, Colorado on safety duplication as a black box collection of all our germplasm. This will be done in 2003/04.

Seed multiplication for regional germplasm exchange as part of our INGER program is being done at our Senegal sub-station and will be ready for distribution in the current year.

3. Return Plan to Bouake and M'be

With relocation to Abidjan in Sep 2002, as mentioned in Section 1, WARDA management put in place short, medium and long-term strategies to manage the Ivoirian crisis as it unfolded. These essentially entailed an optimistic short-term scenario of a return to Bouake and M'be Headquarters before December 2002. Failure of this event to occur, in Jan 2003 the medium term strategy was implemented – a move to another location as a temporary relocation where scientific staff would re-establish a consolidated research program. This event occurred in Jan/Feb 2003 with 15 scientists being relocated to the ICRISAT facility at Samanko, near Bamako in Mali. Three vacant positions, the recruitment of which was interrupted in the last quarter of 2002, have been re-activated. One of these – the position of Coordinator of the African Rice Initiative – was filled in early Mar. The other two positions – Upland Rice Breeder and Soil Fertility Agronomist – are now at the long/short list stages.

The WARDA Board at its Feb 2003 Meeting in Bamako decided that the temporary relocation in Bamako should be planned for up to a 2-year period to allow scientists the necessary time-frame for research planning and implementation. This has, therefore, triggered the long-term strategy. An alternative in case "return to Bouake is not foreseeable" as contained in Mr Franklin Moore's email is not envisaged and is therefore not in our present framework.

Thinking Ahead: Since the start of hostilities, WARDA has maintained excellent relations with the Government in Abidjan and cordial relations with the occupying forces in Bouake. This has meant frequent contacts and interactions at the highest levels of the military and civilian arms of Government. Frequent official missions were made to Bouake and the HQ at M'be with full authorization from the government and cooperation of the occupying forces. The UNDP facilitated these missions with the necessary laissez-passer. Apart from stolen vehicles, property at M'be and staff houses in Bouake still remains safe and mostly untouched.

On May 2, 2003, all concerned forces in Côte d'Ivoire signed a Peace Agreement including an integral truce and cease-fire and end of all hostilities. This Agreement has immediate effect. Prior to this event and in view of positive developments in early 2003, we had met with the Ivorian authorities to seek avenues and means for our return. Security of staff and WARDA's investments and properties remain the main driving force of this return agenda. The following steps were agreed upon on 30 April:

- A joint team of WARDA staff and host-country tutelary Ministry of Scientific Research personnel will visit Bouaké and M'bé for a thorough assessment of losses, damages and repairs to property and living conditions. This event is planned to occur in May.
- Based on the report, a Press Conference will be held jointly by the Director General of WARDA and the Ivorian Minister of Scientific Research.
- This will be followed by a joint mission involving WARDA Management and high level Government officials to Headquarters. Media coverage will alert the public of the imminent return of WARDA personnel to Bouaké and its Headquarters at M'be.
- *Ceteris paribus*, a progressive return plan will be implemented with the first step being the return of a core team of staff led by a senior manager to Bouaké. Return of the first batch of IRS will be dependent on satisfactory developments thereafter.
- This plan is estimated at between 3-6 months from May 2, 2003 for full implementation.
- The financial implications during the last six months have been overwhelming and would be more so in the months ahead.

4. Conclusion

The CGIAR Chair, Director and Secretariat staff, the WARDA Council Chair, Board Chair and Management have worked very closely together during the last several months of the Ivorian crisis. Frequent communication, in-depth analysis and planning have characterized this close interaction. The CGIAR members have been regularly informed through frequent and detailed – sometimes even graphic – Updates, including 5 News Releases.

WARDA's research operations remain vigorous, its staff and families vibrant and the NERICA – the flagship of the CGIAR – continues to spread, testifying to the indomitable spirit of the Center.

We agree with Mr Franklin Moore, USAID, regarding "the complexity of the challenge and the situation", which WARDA has so far mastered effectively. However, we await further clarification of the purpose and objectives of a CGIAR Working Group as proposed by him. If it adds value and will serve as an instrument to muster the needed financial support for WARDA to emerge from this difficult period, it would be most welcome.

5. Acknowledgement

The support of the CGIAR/World Bank in providing financial assistance through an emergency grant to WARDA is gratefully acknowledged. In addition, the personal moral support from a host of individuals cannot be fully nor adequately documented in these pages.

8 May 2003

Kanayo F. Nwanze
Director General
WARDA – The Africa Rice Center